

# *southcarolina* **STR****NG**

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**GUIDELINES FOR REOPENING OUR HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY**



**South Carolina – Opening Restaurants  
Updated Guidance and Regulations  
Updated May 24, 2021**

As part of the ongoing process of facilitating economic recovery and revitalization in a safe, strategic, and incremental manner, the State of South Carolina should continue to encourage effective “social distancing” practices and implement additional targeted mandates and narrowly tailored emergency measures to combat and control the spread of COVID-19.

While this is our current guidance, we will continue to evaluate our protocols to continue to reduce exposure to and spread of Covid-19, in line with CDC and SC DHEC recommendations.

**Required Signage on Entry Doors:**

- No one with a fever or persistent cough is permitted in the restaurant. This includes employees, patrons and suppliers/vendors.
- All employees and customers shall:
  - Not enter if they feel generally unwell
  - Sneeze or cough into a cloth or tissue
  - Not shake hands or engage in any unnecessary physical contact

**Post in a publicly prominent place in your facility your commitment to:**

- Food safety
- Staff safety training
- Cleaning and sanitizing
- Steps that you are taking to go above and beyond in providing safe food and a safe, enjoyable dining experience
- Customer safety
- Customer responsibility

These signs and others can be downloaded from the [DHEC website](#).

**The following steps are recommended to be followed in order to safely operate and build the trust of our customers:**

### **Cleaning and Sanitizing:**

- Create, execute and maintain a strict cleaning and sanitizing protocol. Use CDC Cleaning and Disinfecting guidance.

### **Training:**

- All restaurants are required to meet the minimum education and training standards outlined in DHEC Regulation 61-25. At least one employee with the authority to direct and control food preparation and service shall be a food protection manager who has been certified by an accredited program. Only Conference for Food Protection ANSI-certified Food Protection Manager courses meet the requirements.
- Continue and enhance employee safety training, highly emphasizing proper hand washing and hygiene etiquette. Educate employees about when they should stay home and when they can return to work.
- For those operations with carry out and delivery service, have employees take the Free ServSafe COVID-19 training for carryout and delivery service.

### **Face Coverings:**

- In accordance with the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) guidelines and the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) recommendations, effective immediately, the SC Restaurant and Lodging Association and the Palmetto Priority Program will ease face covering requirements based on certain criteria, as follows:
- **Restaurant and lodging guests:** While we encourage face coverings where social distancing is not feasible, fully vaccinated guests are no longer required to wear face coverings indoors or outdoors. We will continue to require guests who are unvaccinated to wear face coverings. This will be based on an honor system - guests will not have to show proof of vaccination.
- **Restaurant and lodging workers:** For the safety of our guests, we recommend wearing face coverings indoors, regardless of vaccination status, and follow any applicable local/brand/corporate requirements. However, we will ease face covering requirements for fully vaccinated employees who are working outside, or not in close contact with others.
- We are counting on everyone to use the honor system concerning their vaccination status. Full vaccination coverage is defined as receiving both doses of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines or a single dose of the J&J/Janssen vaccine, plus two weeks. We continue to strongly encourage those who have not been vaccinated to continue to wear masks and consider getting vaccinated when eligible.
- Learn more on how to properly use the cloth face coverings at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

**Food Safety and Restaurant Dining Room Focus:**

- Change restaurant and bar layouts to the extent possible to ensure that all customer parties remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g., removing tables/stools/chairs, marking tables/stools/chairs that are not for use).
- Restaurants should discourage community seating as much as possible
- Encourage guests to wait outside the restaurant or in an area that can properly socially distance.
- Consider discontinuing self-service buffets or food stations to prevent customers and patrons from reusing service utensils to avoid potential physical contamination. An alternative option is to set up buffets cafeteria style where employees dispense food for the guests. Create a flow that will allow for social distancing between parties.
- Self-service drink stations should be cleaned and sanitized as often as possible.
- Avoid using or sharing items that are reusable to the extent possible, such as menus, condiments, and any other food containers. Instead, consider using disposable or digital menus (menus viewed on cellphones), single serving condiments, and no-touch trash cans and doors.
- Create a plan and checklist of all back of house and front of house surfaces the staff and customers will come in contact with to facilitate cleaning and disinfecting.
- Select one person per shift to be in charge of safety and sanitation during the shift, observing and ensuring that hand washing is done appropriately, and sanitation of dining room areas, restrooms, lobbies and door areas is done regularly and consistently.
- Continue to adhere to cleaning and sanitizing requirements in SC Regulation 61-25, Retail Food Establishments.
- Clean and disinfect, using approved sanitizing solution, tables, chairs, reusable menus and check presenters after each use.
- Sanitize all doorknobs and other frequently touched surfaces as much as possible between newly arriving parties with approved sanitizing solution.
- Cleaning supplies should be single use (paper towels, disposable mop heads) or laundered between uses (dish towels, mop heads).

**Employee Safety Focus:**

- Follow CDC and DHEC guidelines regarding employee health.
- Actively encourage and require employees who are sick, who have symptoms of COVID-19, who have tested positive for COVID-19, or who have recently had close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 to stay at home, and

should develop policies to encourage any such employees to stay at home without fear of reprisal or adverse employment action on this basis.

- Immediately excuse and exclude any employees indicating symptoms of COVID-19 or who have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the preceding fourteen (14) days.
- Heightened hygienic practices including peer observation and supervisor oversight to ensure staff are washing hands frequently and correctly, proper glove usage when used, and that staff avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth.
- Provide physical barriers such as Plexiglas between employees and customers when possible for counter service ordering, food pick up areas and host stands.
- Use technology solutions where possible to reduce person-to-person interaction, mobile and menu tablets, text on arrival for seating and contactless payment options.
- Immediately exclude any staff members indicating symptoms or that have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone diagnosed COVID-19.
- All employees handling ready to eat food should wear gloves. This is not just for the safety of our guests, but also for their psychological sense of safety. Where gloves are not used, follow requirements in R.61-25 Retail Food Establishments.